



Pletscher Hard Case: Sturdy, rugged and water resistant

by Ron Burkitt, PCI #488

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“Why does a bike cop need a barbeque grill on his bike?” This is just one of the odd questions I was asked at the 2008 IPMBA Conference in Indianapolis, when people saw the odd pack on my bike. In all actuality, it wasn't a grill at all but a “Hard Case”. The Hard Case is a new design in rear rack bags from a Swiss company named Pletscher. I stumbled upon the company while attending Interbike in 2007. I was looking at kickstands to fit full suspension bikes, which Pletscher makes, when I found the Hard Case, and it does kind of look like a barbeque grill.

As all-weather cyclists, we always have our eyes open for new products to aid us during our shifts. The Hard Case looked like it had potential as a sturdy, rugged, and water-resistant rear pack. As the name indicates, the case is hard, so no drooping over the sides of the rack as some packs do, and it is also crush resistant to protect the items inside. The sales manager at Pletscher's US affiliate, Thor USA, Thorsten Schaette, sent me a Hard Case to evaluate for myself.

My Hard Case and rack was easily assembled right out of the box. The Hard Case itself requires no assembly. Pletscher has an integrated rack with a carrying capacity of 55 pounds that gives you the ability to lock the case to the rack. However, the design of the case allows for other mounting techniques as simple as bolting it to your current rear rack.

The Hard Case has two features not found in the typical rear packs most of us currently use. First, the top of the case overlaps the bottom, making the case very water resistant. I found that the majority of the water that made it inside my case was due to the mounting holes in the bottom of the case that I'd failed to seal up. Secondly, the case has a locking handle. This allows you to maintain the chain of custody for any evidence you might place in the case.

The Pletscher Hard Case has plenty of room for your duty equipment. I filled the case with my small tire pump, traffic citation, first aid kit, tools, reports, spare tube, lockout tool and more, and still had room for a raincoat. In fact if you put the lockout tool in just right, it holds the Hard Case open for very easy access to all of your equipment. The Hard Case also has a one inch high ridge at the bottom of the lid, allowing for reflective tape and/or insignia to provide for maximum conspicuity.

All in all, Pletscher has made a strong case for their Hard Case as an alternative to the soft, water permeable nylon rear racks on the market today. My plan is to begin outfitting our bikes with this new design as soon as possible, and considering how quickly the nylon bags we use fade in the sunlight, that time is rapidly approaching.

If you have any questions, comments or orders please contact Thorsten Schaette at Thor USA, 3550 North Union Drive Olney, IL 62450. The telephone numbers are 800-222-8356 or 618-395-3840, fax 618-393-2956; his e-mail address is thorsten@thorusa.com.

Ron is a school resource officer in Hilliard, Ohio. He is currently serving on the IPMBA Board of Directors in the position of treasurer, having previously held the position of Industry Liaison. He can be reached at treasurer@ipmba.org.

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